

be collected throughout the implementation process. Attendance logs, procurement records, press releases and print materials are useful indicators of a program's success.

Program Fidelity

Finally, we end with the beginning. Program fidelity returns us to the question of intent. Was our mission accomplished? Was the target population reached? Were the desired observable outcomes achieved? Measures of program fidelity can take years—did the second graders we talked to in 2010 end up with a degree in some STEM discipline in 2024? In the time between our interaction with that child and the completion of her/his degree, was a passion for science nurtured by his/her family/teachers/community. It goes without saying that this endeavor should not be a one-year commitment, but rather a yearly contribution of passionate science from the Vanderbilt Brain Institute and its collaborators.

Conclusion

More formative evaluation of STEM outreach should be conducted to see how to best increase public engagement and awareness of vital health and science issues. Evaluation of this sort is necessary because the literature documenting science outreach is thin and current suggestions for “best practices” and/ or strategies to integrate within high school curricula are even sparser. The aim of our future evaluations will be to inform the field by enriching the “best practices” literature on science education outreach programming so that concrete strategies can be developed to best support the implementation of STEM educational outreach programs in the future...



A note from the Director

“Wow!” That was the universal comment I received whenever I showed anyone the inaugural issue of *VRN*. The feedback on last year’s issue has been nothing short of phenomenal, and this year’s edition looks to be equally exceptional! I carry a copy of *VRN* with me whenever I travel – whether to conferences, to talk at other universities, to study section, etc. When at these venues, I make it a point to show my colleagues the issue, and to watch their faces drop as they leaf through the pages. In today’s increasingly electronic age, I’ve been surprised and delighted that something so tangible as a copy of *VRN* can be such an effective advertisement for the quality of the research and training endeavors within the Vanderbilt Neuroscience Program. We should all be proud to be a part of this remarkable endeavor. A special thanks goes out to Caleb Doll and Mariam Eapen, who have worked tirelessly to begin to assume the reins of editorial leadership from the founding father – Chris Ciarleglio.

Yours in science,

Mark T. Wallace, Ph.D.



Program Update

The Neuroscience Graduate Program at Vanderbilt University is entering its twelfth year of existence under the young directorship of Prof. Mark Wallace. For the upcoming 2010-11 academic year, the program will have 71 trainees doing coursework and research in their mentors’ laboratories, pursuing their doctoral degrees in Neuroscience. These trainees come from 23 states and 9 foreign countries. We have 94 training faculty committed to preparing our students for careers in teaching and research. Our students receive strong academic and research training from our outstanding training faculty.

Roz Johnson, B.B.A.
Interdisciplinary Program Coordinator